



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT OFFICE
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, Oregon 97504
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

1792 (116)
JITW Restoration EA
A6418(WHY:jl)

MAR 22 2001

Dear Interested Public:

The *Environmental Assessment* (EA) for the Job in the Woods (JITW) Restoration Project (enclosed) is being advertised in the Medford Mail Tribune for a 30 day public review period. The proposed action would replace seven (7) undersized culverts (not designed to withstand a 100 year flood event) and implement the transportation management objectives recommended by watershed analysis. This includes reducing the number of miles of existing roads by decommissioning existing roads and closing roads to vehicle use by the general public.

The primary purpose of a public review is to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the BLM's determination that there are no significant impacts associated with the proposed action and, therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary.

This EA is published on the Medford District web site, www.or.blm.gov/Medford/, under "Planning Documents."

We welcome your comments on the content of the EA. We are particularly interested in comments that address one or more of the following: (1) new information that would affect the analysis, (2) possible improvements in the analysis; and (3) suggestions for improving or clarifying the proposed management direction. Specific comments are the most useful. Comments, including names and addresses, will be available for public review. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name and/or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

All comments should be made in writing and mailed to Bill Yocum, Ashland Resource Area, 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, OR 97504. Any questions should be directed to Bill at (541)618-2384.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Drehabl
Field Manager
Ashland Resource Area

Enclosure as stated

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT
ASHLAND RESOURCE AREA

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

FOR

Jobs In The Woods Restoration Project
OR-110-01-010

Spring, 2001

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
ASHLAND RESOURCE AREA

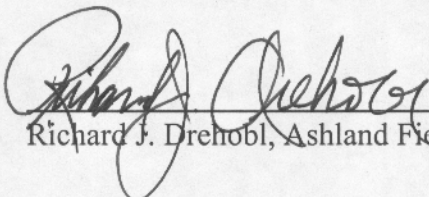
EA COVER SHEET

Project Name/Number: Job In The Woods Restoration Project, OR-110-01-010

Location: Ashland Resource Area

List of Preparers	Title	Responsibility
John Samuelson	Forest Engineer	Team Lead, Engineering, and Roads
Brad Tong	Botanist	T&E Plants and Invasive Weeds
George Arnold	Wildlife Biologist	T&E Animals, Wildlife
Jennifer Smith	Fisheries Biologist	Fisheries, Riparian
Dan Dammann	Hydrologist	Soils, Watershed, Riparian
Bill Yocum	Planning and Environmental Coordinator	NEPA

This environmental assessment (EA) was prepared utilizing a systematic interdisciplinary approach integrating the natural sciences, social sciences, and the environmental design arts with planning.


Richard J. Drenohl, Ashland Field Manager

03-21-01
Date

JOB IN THE WOODS RESTORATION PROJECT EA

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CHAPTER I: NEED FOR THE PROPOSAL AND PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

A. NEED FOR THE PROPOSAL

With the increase of population in southern Oregon and the increase of species listed with the Endangered Species Act the conditions of our forested landscapes are an important feature for watershed health and our quality of life. The roads in our uplands are a critical component dealing with impacts of watershed health.

This project helps to restore watershed health by: 1) Replacing seven (7) undersized culverts (not designed to withstand a 100 year flood event). 2) Implementing the transportation management objectives recommended by watershed analysis. This includes reducing the number of miles of existing roads by decommissioning existing roads and closing roads to vehicle use by the general public. Project area maps are located in the EA file and can be viewed by appointment with Bill Yocum at (541)618-2384.

B. CONFORMANCE WITH EXISTING LAND USE PLANS

The proposed activities are in conformance with and tiered to the *Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines* (USDI, USDA 2001) and the *Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (RMP) (USDI 1995b). These Resource Management Plans incorporates the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl and the Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (NWFP) (USDA and USDI 1994). These documents are available at the Medford BLM office and the Medford BLM web site at <<http://www.or.blm.gov/Medford/>>.

C. RELATIONSHIP TO STATUTES, REGULATIONS, AND OTHER PLANS

The proposed action and alternatives are in conformance with the direction given for the management of public lands in the Medford District by the Oregon and California Lands Act of 1937 (O&C Act) and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA).

D. DECISIONS TO BE MADE ON THIS ANALYSIS

This environmental assessment (EA) is being prepared to determine if the proposed action and any of the alternatives would have a significant effect on the human environment thus requiring the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) as prescribed in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. It is also being used to inform interested parties of the anticipated impacts and provide them with an opportunity to comment on the various alternatives.

The Ashland Resource Area Field Manager must decide:

- Whether or not the impacts of the proposed action are significant to the human environment beyond those impacts addressed in previous NEPA documents. If the impacts are determined to be insignificant, then a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) can be issued and a decision can be implemented. If any impacts are determined to be significant to the human environment, then an Environmental Impact Statement must be prepared before the Manager makes a decision.
- Whether to implement the proposed action alternative or defer to the no action alternative

E. ISSUES OF CONCERN

The following issues were identified throughout the scoping process. Not every issue is analyzed in detail by this EA. All of the issues were reviewed by the ID Team.

- The spread of noxious weeds and other invasive non-native species.
- Impacts to Threatened and Endangered Species.

F. PROPOSED ACTION ALTERNATIVE - Replace seven (7) undersized culverts (not designed to withstand a 100 year flood event) and implement the transportation management objectives recommended by watershed analysis. This includes reducing the number of miles of existing roads by decommissioning existing roads and closing roads to vehicle use by the general public. The following tables lists the locations and type of treatment proposed.

Pipe Arch Culverts		
General Location	Legal Description	Planned Upgrade Size
Birdseye Creek	T37S R4W Section 4	157" X 101" X 70'
Kane Creek	T37S R3W Section 11	112" X 75" X 60'
Chapman Creek #1	T39S R4W Section 1	112" X 75" X 60'
Chapman Creek #2	T38S R4W Section 36	112" X 75" X 76'
Star Gulch MP 6.04	T39S R4W Section 22	112" X 75" X 60'
Star Gulch MP 6.5	T39S R4W Section 22	66" X 54" X 64'
Nine Mile	T39S R4W Section 32	112" X 75" X 60'

Road Treatment Table		
Road Number	Approximate Length (miles)	Type of Treatment
39-3-19.1	0.62	Block
39-3-30.1	1.00	Block
39-3-30.2	0.49	Block
39-3-30.3	0.09	Mechanical Decommission
39-3-30.4	0.76	Block
39-3-30.5	0.10	Mechanical Decommission
39-3-30.6	0.50	Block
39-3-30.8	0.53	Block

Road Treatment Table		
Road Number	Approximate Length (miles)	Type of Treatment
39-4-13.0	0.27	Natural Decommission
39-4-13.1	0.20	Natural Decommission
39-4-22.1	0.50	Mechanical Decommission and Natural Decommission
39-4-22.3	0.51	Block
39-4-22.4	0.25	Mechanical Decommission
39-4-22.5	0.32	Mechanical Decommission
39-4-23.1	0.30	Mechanical Decommission and Natural Decommission
39-4-23.2	1.04	Block and Mechanical Decommission (last 0.25 miles)
Un-numbered Road (T39S,R4W,SE¼ Section 25)	0.59	Mechanical Decommission
Un-numbered Road (T39S,R4W,NE¼ Section 25)	0.85	Natural Decommission
39-4-26.0 & a short spur	0.68	Mechanical Decommission
39-4-28.0	1.91	Block
Un-numbered road E1/2SE1/4Section 23 and NE1/4 Section 26	1.00	Natural Decommission
Un-numbered road SW1/4NE1/4, SE1/4NW1/4 Section 26	0.50	Mechanical Decommission
TOTAL	13.01	

G. PROJECT DESIGN FEATURES

Project Design Features are included for the purpose of mitigating or reducing anticipated adverse environmental impacts which might stem from the implementation of the proposed action alternative.

- In order to minimize the spread of weeds, all machinery capable of ground disturbance would be pressure washed prior to arriving at the contract area and prior to moving between job sites.
- To preclude the establishment of invasive, nonnative plant species, areas of newly disturbed mineral soil would be sown with native plant seed.
- The instream work period is from July 1 - September 15.
- At all stream crossings the approach should be as near a right angle to the stream as possible to minimize disturbance to streambanks and riparian habitat.
- Road crossings on all fish-bearing streams should be designed to **maintain natural streambed substrate and site gradient** where feasible, while minimizing longterm maintenance needs; the specific design should also be based on expected longevity and economics.
- **Width of a crossing structure** should be at least as wide as the mean bankfull width at the crossing site; to be measured by a qualified professional. A structure less than bankfull width will constrict high streamflow and increase water velocity, resulting in scour at the outlet (perching), little to no deposition of streambed substrate in closed bottom structures and possible velocity barrier to fish. Deviation to this general rule should be discussed by the ID Team before final project design and implementation.
- **Divert the stream around the work area** in a manner (e.g. a pipe or lined ditch) that will minimize stream sedimentation. Require the contractor to submit an approved plan for water diversion before instream work begins. The diverted stream should not be returned to the channel through the project area until all instream work has been completed. The resource area fish biologist should be consulted before deviating from this practice. If it is impractical to dewater a stream channel due to factors such as deep channel incision or high gradient, strongly consider scheduling the work toward the end of the instream work period, rather than at the beginning.
- **Reduce movement of sediment downstream** from the project site with the use of straw bales, geotextile fabric or coconut fiber logs/bales immediately downstream of the work area
- **Wet or green (wet: fresh enough to flow; green: hardened but less than 21 days old) cement**, new or old asphalt has acute and chronic adverse effects on aquatic life and should not be allowed to enter a stream. This includes water used to clean tools and wash out cement trucks after delivering material. Again, if the stream is dewatered before construction begins, aquatic species should be unaffected.
- To **restore streambed habitat complexity inside new crossing structures**, consider lining the bottom of the crossing structure with 1-3 foot diameter boulders. (The streambed is usually uniform following preparation of a new site or when replacing an existing pipe. Boulders that are placed in replacement pipes must be large (high) enough so that they are not buried by streambed substrate that may have been deposited immediately upstream of the inlet of the original pipe.) Use a prediction model to determine the

size of boulder needed to ensure stability at the estimated 100 year peak flow.

- Carefully evaluate on a case-by-case basis the need to **maintain aquatic connectivity on non fish-bearing streams** to ensure upstream movement of other aquatic species.

- **Fill material over a stream crossing structure should be stabilized** as soon as possible after construction has been completed, normally before October 15. Work should be temporarily suspended if rain saturates soils to the extent that there is potential for environmental damage, including movement of sediment from the road to the stream.

- **Location of waste stockpile and borrow sites** should be at least one site potential tree length from a stream where sediment-laden runoff can be confined unless there is no way for sediment to move off-site. Using existing sites or creating new ones in Riparian Reserves must be consistent with the Northwest Forest Plan.

- The contractor should be notified that he is responsible for meeting all **state and federal requirements for maintaining water quality**. Standard contract stipulations should include the following:

- Heavy equipment should be inspected and cleaned if necessary before moving onto the project site in order to remove oil and grease, noxious weeds and excessive soil.
- Hydraulic fluid and fuel lines on heavy mechanized equipment must be in proper working condition in order to minimize leakage into streams.
- Waste diesel, oil, hydraulic fluid and other hazardous materials and contaminated soil near the stream should be removed from the site and disposed of in accordance with DEQ regulations. Areas that have been saturated with toxic materials should be excavated to a depth of 12 inches beyond the contaminated material or as required by DEQ.
- Equipment refueling would be conducted within a confined area outside the stream channel such that there is minimal chance that toxic materials could enter a stream.
- Use spill containment booms or other equipment as required by DEQ.
- Equipment containing toxic fluids should not be stored in a stream channel anytime.

- Construct a **control weir** or **rock apron** at a culvert outlet as insurance that water velocity through a new culvert will not cause “perching”: (a) a “**control weir**” (log or boulders) is installed about 3 channel widths downstream of the culvert to back water into the pipe outlet (b) an **rock apron** consists of burying 1-3 foot diameter rock at the culvert outlet across the stream channel and downstream for a distance of 15 feet such that tops of boulders are the same elevation as the bottom of the culvert.

H. NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the “no action” alternative, no watershed restoration would be implemented: there would be no culvert replacements and no roads would be decommissioned and/or blocked.

CHAPTER II: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

CRITICAL ELEMENTS

The following elements of the human environment are subject to requirements specified in statute, regulation, or executive order and must be considered in all EA's.

Table 12: Critical Elements

Critical Element	Affected		Critical Element	Affected	
	Yes	No		Yes	No
Air Quality		✓ *	T & E Species		✓ *
ACECs		✓	Wastes, Hazardous/Solid		✓
Cultural Resources		✓	Water Quality		✓ **
Farmlands, Prime/Unique		✓	Wetlands/Riparian Zones		✓ **
Floodplains		✓	Wild & Scenic Rivers		✓
Nat. Amer. Rel. Concerns		✓	Wilderness		✓
Invasive, Nonnative Species		✓*	Environmental Justice		✓

*These affected critical elements could be impacted by the implementing the proposed action. Impacts are being avoided by project design.

**These affected critical elements would be impacted by implementing the proposed action. The impacts are being reduced by designing the proposed action with Best Management Practices, Management Action/Direction, Standard and Guidelines as outlined in the Environmental Impact Statements (EIS)/Record of Decisions (*RMP*) (*USDI BLM 1995*)(*USDA FS; USDI BLM 1994*) tiered to in Chapter 1. The impacts are not affected beyond those already analyzed by the above mentioned documents.

Only substantive site specific environmental changes that would result from implementing the proposed action or alternatives are discussed in this document. If an ecological component is not discussed, it should be assumed that the resource specialists have considered effects to that component and found the proposed action or alternatives would have minimal or no effects. General or "typical" effects from projects similar in nature to the proposed action alternative are also described in the documents to which this plan is tiered.

EFFECTS OF PROPOSED ACTION ALTERNATIVE

1. Wildlife Resources

Wildlife (Terrestrial)

Habitat immediately adjacent to the culverts to be replaced will be degraded or removed during culvert removal and reinstallation. Because only a small amount of habitat will be affected, and because much of the habitat will reestablish after the culverts are in place, the impact to terrestrial wildlife habitat will be minor.

Blocking/decommissioning the described roads will have a long-term benefit to wildlife due to the decrease in vehicular traffic.

Those animals present in the immediate vicinity of the operations will be subject to short-term disturbance, but this also will be a minor impact.

Threatened/Endangered Species

Suitable habitat for proposed or listed threatened/endangered species will not be affected by the proposed projects. Two of the proposed projects, however, are within 0.25 mile of known northern spotted owl centers-of-activity so seasonal restrictions are warranted to minimize disturbance during the crucial nesting period. Work should not begin on the Kane Creek Culvert or the unnamed road in the NE1/4, Section 25, T.39S., R.4W. until after June 30.

2. Cultural Resources

A cultural survey was performed and the area has been cleared for operations.

3. Special Status and Threatened/Endangered Botanical Species

All proposed actions occur within the road prism. This greatly altered environment does not provide suitable habitat for BLM Special Status botanical species, including those listed or proposed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. This project would have no effect on these species or their habitats.

4. Invasive, Nonnative Species

The proposed project will expose newly disturbed mineral soil. This will provide an environment that favors the invasive, nonnative plant species. Because of the presence of the noxious weed, *Centaurea solstitialis* (yellow starthistle) at many of the project sites, spread of this weed (and potentially others) is a concern. Effects from this project will be mitigated by project design features.

5. Aquatic

Fish are present in all streams proposed for culvert replacement. Special status fish species in these systems include coho (*O. kisutch*), steelhead (*O. mykiss*), Oregon coastal cutthroat (*O. clarki*), redband trout (*O. mykiss ssp.*) and Jenny Creek suckers (*Catostomus rimiculus*). In addition, the Rogue and Applegate Rivers support populations of chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*), pacific lamprey (*Lampetra spp.*), sculpin (*Cottus spp.*), and various warmwater species. Coho are listed as "Threatened" under the Endangered Species Act (as amended, 1973) and Klamath Mountain Province steelhead of southern Oregon

and northern California are proposed for listing. Table 1 identifies special status fish species present in each stream system where activities are planned and special status fish species downstream of scheduled activities.

Table 1. Fish species listed or proposed for listing in areas where culvert replacement activities will occur. “SS” = “Special Status”

Reason for improvements	Stream	Watershed	SS fish species at proposed project site	Additional SS fish species present downstream
Culvert upgrade	Chapman Creek #2	Rogue River	cutthroat trout	coho salmon, steelhead
Culvert upgrade and fish passage improvement	Kane Creek	Rogue River	steelhead and cutthroat trout	coho salmon
	Star Gulch	Applegate River	steelhead and cutthroat trout	coho salmon
	Star Gulch	Applegate River	steelhead and cutthroat trout	coho salmon
	Ninemile Creek	Applegate River	coho salmon, steelhead, and cutthroat trout	no additional SS species
Fish passage improvement	Birdseye Creek	Rogue River	steelhead and cutthroat trout	coho salmon
	Keene Creek	Jenny Creek	redband trout, Jenny Creek suckers	no additional SS species

The above listed culverts are being replaced for several reasons. The culverts are currently undersized and do not meet the standards for a 100-year flood event. When culverts cannot contain a flood event, the stream may erode the road bed and streambank and consequently contributes large quantities of fine sediments into the stream. Fine sediments can clog spawning gravels, suffocate fish eggs or newly-hatched fry, eliminate winter habitat, and reduce the quality of aquatic insect habitat.

Some of the culverts proposed for repair are currently blocking fish passage all or part of the year. For example, the Birdseye Creek culvert is being replaced because the jump at the downstream end of the culvert blocked fish migration. A flat-bottom culvert will be installed with rip rap placed in the culvert bottom to simulate a natural stream bottom.

Of the seven streams listed above, four are currently considered to be “water quality limited” (“303(d) listed”) by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Birdseye Creek, Star Gulch, and Keene Creek are considered water quality limited due to high water temperatures. It is not anticipated that the proposed actions will negatively affect stream water temperatures in any of the streams.

Replacing culverts will contribute fine sediments to the stream during culvert removal and construction.

These sediment inputs will occur during the summer months (July 1 through September 15), which will reduce the negative impacts to fish as much as possible because salmonid fry will have emerged from the redds. However, the risk of sediment impacts from future road blow-outs will be substantially reduced, providing a long-term benefit to the stream ecosystem and fish. Bedload transport will be restored, which will enable fish to access previously inaccessible habitat. Survival of fish populations in each stream will probably be enhanced.

Road decommissioning

Road decommissioning in the Star Gulch drainage will be accomplished using both mechanical and natural decommissioning strategies. Approximately seven miles of road would be decommissioned throughout the project area; 1.0 mile in Riparian Reserves (Table 2). Road decommissioning usually includes ripping, removing drainage structures, seeding and/or planting, mulching, and constructing water bars and barricades. Sometimes roads are already “naturally decommissioning:” grasses and forbs cover the road surface, small trees are growing in the road bed, large trees overhang or have fallen across. In these instances, it might be better to refrain from ripping the road surface. However drainage structures would be removed and water bars or barricades may be constructed

Blocking, decommissioning, and/or improving road drainage on roads within Riparian Reserves may briefly increase fine sediment input to the system. These actions however, are expected to reduce road-caused sedimentation over the longterm and allow riparian vegetation to recolonize the road surfaces. As trees grow up in the road bed, their roots loosen the compacted soil, restoring groundwater flow, thus improving the humid character of the riparian area. These trees also contribute organic material to the streams, provide shade, and increase potential large wood for eventual instream complexity.

Table 2. Road decommissioning in the Star Gulch watershed

Drainage Area	Action (type and distance (mi.) of decommissioning)			Road density (mi/mi ²)	
	Mechanical	Natural	Combination	Before	After
1503	0.25			5.3	5.0
1512	0.32			3.8	2.4
1515	2.22	1.0	0.5	8.8	5.5
1518			0.3	3.9	3.3
1533		0.2		1.6	1.4
1539		0.27		0.5	0.2
1545	0.5		0.75	3.9	3.3
1548	0.1			4.9	4.6
1551	0.09			5.1	5.1
Totals	3.48	1.47	1.55	37.8	30.8

6. Water Quality

Proposed Action

Upgrading culverts and decommissioning roads will have positive impacts on the soil and water resource.

Upgrading the existing drainage structures to withstand a 100 year flood event, allows for more efficient transport of streamflow and the associated sediment, bedload, and debris. This will minimize the risk of drainage structure failure. Undersized culverts can become plugged by coarse debris, and/or washed out by excessive streamflow which would damage roads and deliver high amounts of sediment to the streams.

Roads collect surface water runoff and intercept subsurface water. This water is quickly transported from the roads to streams. A road-altered stream network may cause peak flows to increase in magnitude and change the timing of runoff entering the streams. This is more pronounced in areas with high road densities and where roads are in close proximity to streams. Improperly designed and maintained roads are usually the main cause of stream sedimentation. The proposed action would result the decommissioning of 5.9 miles of road which are seldom or no longer used. This will result in a decrease in road densities and a decreased source of sedimentation.

The closing of 7.36 miles of road with barricades would help reduce sediment input by restricting traffic use on those roads. This is especially important during the winter season when erosion potential and sediment production is highest, and would be greatly increased by road traffic. Therefore, closing these roads will result in a long term decrease in sediment production.

Drainage structure improvement and road decommissioning activities could cause a short term increase in stream sedimentation. Adverse effects would be localized, extending several hundred feet downstream of stream crossings and would last less than one year. Culvert upgrading and road decommissioning is intended to reduce actual and potential erosion, potential road failure, and the resulting stream sedimentation. Sedimentation would either decrease (improve) after the initial flush of sediment is dispersed, or be maintained at its existing level, depending on existing road and stream conditions. Overall, there should be a long term decrease (improvement) in stream sedimentation rates in the areas where the proposed actions take place.

No Action Alternative

Under this alternative there would be no upgrading of culverts or decommissioning of roads. Undersized culverts would continue to be at risk of failing during high flow events which could deliver high amounts of sediment to the streams. Several miles of poorly maintained natural surface roads would continue to be a major source of sediment. No improvement of the affected watersheds would occur at this time.

CHAPTER III: AGENCIES CONSULTED AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A. LEGAL CONSULTATION

- National Marine Fisheries Service
- US Fish and Wildlife Service

B. PROFESSIONAL CONSULTATION

- Federal Highway Administration
- Medford BLM Road Maintenance

C. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Publicity

Public notice of the availability of this EA was provided through advertisement in the Medford Mail Tribune and the BLM Medford District's central registration and recording system.

2. Notification

A copy of the EA was mailed to the following organizations:

- Applegate River Watershed Council
- Association of O&C Counties
- Audubon Society
- Friends of the Greensprings
- Headwaters
- Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center
- Little Butte Creek Watershed Council
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Oregon Department of Forestry
- Oregon Natural Resource Council
- Sierra Club, Rogue Group
- The Confederated Tribes
- The Pacific Rivers Council

3. Availability

A copy of this EA is available upon request from the Ashland Resource Area, Bureau of Land Management, 3040 Biddle Rd., Medford, OR 97540, (541)618-2200. The EA has also been placed in the public reading room at the Bureau of Land Management office (above address) and a copy sent to the Southern Oregon University Library and Jackson County Branch (Applegate & Rush) Libraries.